



“Shaken Infant Syndrome” or “Shaken Baby Syndrome” happens when caregivers become frustrated with children and shake them forcefully. Even mild or moderate shaking can cause serious injury. The damage that occurs usually cannot be seen. Severe injury is most common in very young children, but can happen to four- and five- year old children.

- 1/3 of children who are shaken will die
- 1/3 of children who are shaken will be seriously injured
- 1/3 of children who are shaken will recover with learning disabilities or other problems



Prevent Child Abuse Indiana

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Partially funded by the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration, 402 W. Washington Street, P.O. Box 7083, Indianapolis, IN 46207-1083.

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Preventing Shaken Infant Syndrome



Prevent Child Abuse Indiana



If you or someone else has shaken a child, take the child to the emergency room immediately. Bleeding inside the brain can be treated, but only if you tell the doctors you shook the child. Waiting will only cause further damage. This may save your child a lot of problems in the future...and possibly save his or her life.

Studies show that babies are shaken when a caregiver is left alone and becomes frustrated with a crying baby. As a caregiver, you may feel like you should be able to “fix” the situation and your frustration can lead to a loss of control. You can learn how to handle frustration with a crying baby.

Shaken Infant Syndrome can result in

- death
- brain damage
- spinal injury / paralysis
- blindness or other eye trauma
- delay in normal development
- seizures
- broken bones
- dislocations
- mental retardation

If the baby won't stop crying

and you feel yourself getting angry or tense, it's okay to place the baby in a safe place for a short period of time. Be sure to be available if an emergency should arise.

To calm the baby, take time to

- See if the baby is hungry or needs a diaper changed
- Talk softly to the baby
- Help the baby suck on its hand or a pacifier
- Gently rock the baby in your arms
- Walk the baby cuddled against your shoulder
- Take the baby for a walk in a stroller
- Create “white noise” by running water, a sweeper or a dryer
- Play music
- Whisper or sing softly in the baby's ear

To calm yourself, take time to

- Count to 10 as many times as you need to
- Listen to music
- Watch television
- Take a shower
- Exercise

If you still feel out of control, take time to call a friend, relative or neighbor and ask for help.

Should you need more information

about this or other parenting concerns, call the Care Line at 800.CHILDREN, 800.244.5373, Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.